



Living, breathing art.

A New Community Arts Venue for Downtown Columbus

Renovation of the Former Central Presbyterian Church



Background & Need for Project

Built in 1859 with an addition added in 1926, the former Central Presbyterian Church at 132 S. 3rd Street is the fourth-oldest building in Downtown Columbus. In 2011, the congregation had made the decision to deconsecrate and close the church and sell the building. Recognizing the building's incredible potential, CAPA purchased it in 2013 to create a new performance and event venue in downtown Columbus that would fill a gap in the existing facilities and preserve the historic building.

CAPA's venues are critical infrastructure for the Columbus performing arts scene, serving the entire community: our theatres serve over 900,000 individuals each season, with hundreds of events. We own and/or operate five venues in Downtown Columbus: the Ohio, Palace, Southern, and Lincoln Theatres, and the Riffe Center Theatre Complex. A slightly smaller venue with a capacity of approximately 300-600, superb acoustics, and flexible seating is a welcome addition to CAPA's portfolio as we strive to diversify programming and engage new audiences. This will not take anything away from our existing theatres; on the contrary, demand for mid- and smaller-sized venues grows every year, and both the Lincoln and Southern Theatres have been operating at capacity for years, and frequently have to turn away business due to lack of availability. The new space will create more opportunities for local arts organizations to offer programming to Columbus audiences, at both the church venue and in CAPA's historic theatres.

Project Description

CAPA's plans for the former Central Presbyterian Church will not only preserve a beautiful piece of Columbus' history, but will reimagine and re-purpose the building as a cultural jewel for the city, ensuring the structural integrity and preservation of this historic building while making it useful to Columbus' growing population. We will transform the former church building into an ideal venue for arts and cultural events, educational programs, and event rentals and gatherings, such as weddings, proms, quinceañeras, bar and bat mitzvahs, corporate events, and more. **A top priority for the new venue is to offer programs at affordable ticket prices, which are accessible to everyone in Columbus.**

Our project will transform this historic former church into a state-of-the-art, multi-purpose community venue with flexible performance and event space with a capacity of 300-650, depending on configuration. The new performance space will be in the original 1859 church sanctuary, welcoming patrons with gracious, accessible entrance and lobby spaces. Flexible seating and staging will enable the space to be easily reconfigured in different ways, providing great versatility and making the space suitable for virtually any type of event and performance.

Extensive construction and restoration work will address:

- Performance infrastructure, including dressing rooms, stage space, and acoustic improvements.
- Accessibility, safety, and security, including ADA-compliant entrances, enhanced security systems, and fire prevention.
- A high-level visitor experience, including a beautiful atrium and lobby, concession areas, ample restrooms, and two concierge areas: one in the main floor entry space and one on the second floor, which will connect to a rooftop bar on top of the new structure to the south of the main space (the current nave).
- Building preservation, including structural and external repairs, replastering, and repainting.

Renderings of New Venue



Front of new building at night



Front of new building during day



Performance space



First floor entry and concierge area



Second floor concierge area



Rooftop bar

Public Significance & Community Benefit Via Programming

- The new venue will strengthen our city's reputation for great arts and culture by adding a dynamic new space to CAPA's current Downtown venues.
- Audiences will be drawn Downtown to experience exceptional art and enjoy the charm of this new venue, supporting local restaurants, parking, hotels, and more.
- The size and flexibility of the performance space, outfitted with state-of-the-art technology and performance infrastructure, will inspire and attract a broad spectrum of entertainers from local artists and organizations to world-class touring artists. In many cases this talent will represent programming that CAPA has been unable to accommodate in our traditional venues.
- With a seated capacity of 300-350 and SRO (standing room only) capacity of 600-650, this venue will be right-sized for acts that are too small for the 900-seat Southern and Davidson Theatres. Local, regional, or national music artists that have outgrown bars and very small venues will be a fixture of weekend evenings.
- Immersive entertainment, performance art in which the artists and audience share space and experience, is a growing and innovative field. This venue will be capable of hosting a variety of immersive experiences ranging from locally produced product (with partners like Opera Columbus and The Contemporary Theatre) to national touring immersive programs.
- Dance floors are an important and expected component of the performance experience in some genres; Latino music and dance bands are a great example. This venue's flexible seating and stage will accommodate a variety of dance floor configurations.
- For some artists and audiences, the casual feel of a standing-room-only format creates a better experience than a seated performance. This venue can be configured with an SRO layout that allows attendees to mingle and casually move between the floor, balcony, and the concierge areas. This flexibility will provide CAPA access to touring artists that have not played in our traditional theatres.

More than just a new performance venue, the renovated church building is being created as a space for everyone in Columbus and central Ohio, with a broad range of activities and events that will engage and attract people from throughout the city. CAPA is working with a wide range of partners to determine how this new venue can serve the community, with a focus on programming that will represent and serve students, families, and the entire community. Potential examples we have discussed with our partners include:

- New opportunities for expanded collaboration between CAPA and Columbus City Schools (CCS), through potential partnerships with CCS workforce development programs and summer arts engagement programs. Examples include partnering with the Culinary Arts program at the Columbus Downtown Highschool, and opportunities for students from The Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center or other CCS schools to gain backstage/technical experience through job shadowing or internships with CAPA professionals.
- Locally-based bands, emerging artists, vocal ensembles, chamber music groups, small theatre companies, and more will find the new venue provides an excellent setting for their work. CAPA is considering a variety of options to attract local talent to the venue, including discounted rental rates for local artists and organizations, and weekly "local nights" featuring Columbus-based artists and arts organizations, with admission fees going to the performer or group. We can also offer exhibitions of works by local visual artists in spaces within the new venue.

- Summer camps and program rehearsals by Momentum, a non-profit dance outreach organization that serves children from Columbus and central Ohio, including many from low to moderate incomes.
- Open mic programs and other community arts activities offered by Transit Arts, a citywide youth arts program of Central Community House.
- Non-traditional performances and a variety of education and community engagement programs offered by Opera Columbus.
- Workshops for Broadway in the Classroom, offered by CAPA in partnership with Broadway in Columbus, which provides Title 1 students with the opportunity to engage with Broadway through six weeks of show-related curriculum developed by their teachers and CAPA, and aligned with Ohio Department of Education standards.
- Programs offered as part of the ARISE Program (ARts through Intergenerational Social Engagement). ARISE, a collaboration between CAPA, The Ohio State University, and Worthington Christian Village, is a six-week intergenerational program focused on storytelling, which launched in 2023. Participants include high school student volunteers, OSU researchers, and older adults.

Timeline

- Fall 2022 – Winter 2023: Feasibility study, conducted by Cramer & Associates
- Summer 2023 – Fall 2025: Fundraising campaign
- Fall 2025 – Summer 2027: Construction
- Spring – Summer 2027: Prepare for building operations and begin to schedule programming in new venue
- Fall 2027: Projected venue opening

Budget

Construction	\$10,850,000
Contingency	\$1,600,000
Professional fees (architects, designers, consultants, and engineers)	\$800,000
<u>Furnishings & technology</u>	<u>\$750,000</u>
Total project expenses:	\$14,000,000

Sustainability

This venue's operations will be integrated into CAPA's portfolio of central Ohio arts venues. With the efficiency created by a shared operating structure, the business model for the new venue forecasts a financially sustainable operational budget. Once the building has opened, routine maintenance and annual operations will be funded by income generated from concessions, ticket sales, and event rentals. Long-term upkeep will be integrated into CAPA's capital planning that utilizes internal funding (including a per ticket facility fee) and dedicated public and private funding sources.

